

SIR CUPID OF THE PURPLE HEART

By GRACE ROWAN

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The fate selected Paul Harvey's devotion for his sister as their tool, and with it drove him straight to his doom. His idolatrous affection for his tall, stately Virginia, who had "mothered" him ever since the death of their parents, made superstitious women shake their heads and his club friends smile. When Virginia married rich, easy going James Drew people said things would change and Paul would certainly marry and settle down, just as such an eligible person as he owed it to society to do.

But things did not change. Paul explained that Virginia's heart was roomy enough for them both, and while he dwelt nominally at his university club the real heart fire continued to burn for him in Virginia's beautiful home.

And so it happened that when Virginia's second birthday after her marriage drew near the question of selecting a suitable gift for her exercised Paul's mind considerably more than the fate of certain stocks he had on the market. His broker was paid to look after his business. There was no one he would trust with the selection of Virginia's present.

To his bewildered brain it seemed as if there was nothing which she did not have. Then he remembered the dinner she was to give when a certain art connoisseur should arrive from Paris, and he decided that some unique decoration for her table should form his gift. Further, it should be orchids in some shape or form, for orchids of a peculiar pinkish lavender, with great purple hearts, were Virginia's hobby. This idea he carried to Mrs. Donnelly, a sympathetic friend whose fat was charity bazaars, and from her he obtained the address of a young woman who made silk candle shades of exceeding daintiness.

"But, my dear Paul," added Mrs. Donnelly, as she wrote the address on her card, "Miss Carr's prices will probably stagger you. She charges fearfully for those flimsy little things, but she gets her price and you must stand for it." You see, Mrs. Van Allen and her set have taken her up and she has all the orders she can fill."

Paul smiled as he slipped the card in his pocket. Compared to the pearls he had given Virginia last year, a couple of silk candle shades would be mere baubles. But what pleased him and he knew would please Virginia was the personal thought the gift would carry. Virginia was absurdly sentimental for a woman 5 feet 10 who affected tailor-made clothes.

And that is how Paul Harvey stood before the small, private entrance of the Carr flat one crisp January morning, with a bit of pastebord in his irreproachably gloved fingers, the popular idea of a new musical comedy on his lips and ignorance of impending danger in his heart. Then she opened the door, and he found himself clutching after a bit of pastebord that was slipping from his fingers. The soft whistle died on his lips, and a peculiar something in the place where he had heretofore supposed his heart rested clicked out a danger signal.

He introduced himself, presented his friend's card and stated his errand, but all quite mechanically. His real self was asking itself the most absurd questions, such as whether copper colored hair like hers wasn't much more effective than Virginia's blond locks, and why a girl with a carriage like that was working for a lot of inconsiderate, snobbish women, instead of making some good, appreciative chap ridiculously happy.

He was so busy thinking this out that he was quite annoyed when, seated in the diminutive drawing room, he found himself face to face with a mass of "silk things" in many colors, shades of poppies, of roses, of violets, of chrysanthemums. He wondered if a flower grew that could hold the warm light of her wavy hair, or if ever a lily was an ivory so pure as her face.

"Is there anything here you like?" she was saying, and he gripped hard on his cane.

"No; you see, Virginia goes in for orchids. She has such jolly good taste!"

"Yes," suggested the girl sympathetically.

"Her favorite is a purple with a deeper purple heart, and I want the shades just like her favorite flower."

"Well, shall we have a large shade hung with small orchid blossoms, or each shade a single bloom?"

"Bless me, I don't know. You look as if you knew best about that!"— And he almost added "and everything else."

The girl was looking a bit perplexed. "If only I could see one of the flowers I could reproduce its tints very closely in silk."

Paul beamed.

"The very thing! I'll call a cab and we'll drive right down to Shorely's. His orchids are the finest in town."

A deep flush spread over Sylvia Carr's face, but she said quietly and calmly:

"That is quite impossible. My mother is not well enough for me to leave her today."

But Paul was already groaning in spirit. "Cad that I am to think she is the sort to ride round in cabs with strange fellows," quite forgetting that he was an eligible in favor with all chaperons. Then his face brightened.

"I'll have some sent up, and please make a dozen shades. I forget how many candles she uses, but she must

have plenty of light. And, by the way, you wouldn't mind if I dropped in occasionally to see how they are coming on? You know, Virginia is a jolly good sort, the best sister in the world, and—well, I rather think I take more pleasure in making her a gift than she does in receiving it. It's such good fun to think of how surprised and pleased she'll be."

Sylvia hesitated, then smiled. "I will have some ready to show you by Friday."

And Paul realized that the interview was over.

An hour later Sylvia opened a florist's box and gave a cry of delight. Never had she seen such tints as met her gaze in the purple hearts of those orchids, and under the orchids were other blossoms, sweet scented and dewy.

"These for the mother who is not feeling so well today," read the card, but Sylvia put a white rose in her hair, and when, with one of the orchids in her hand, she started out to buy silk for the shades, she remarked inconsequently, "Of course it is absurd, but I'm glad they are for his sister, even if she is the Mrs. Drew who rolls by me in her carriage."

The shades were finished, barely in time for the birthday. Sylvia had never done more exquisite work, and now she hated to pack them one by one in their dainty nests of tissue paper, a perfect orchid each one of them, and when they saw the light once more it would be at a feast graced by clever men and beautiful women. But they would go out of her life forever. Something else would go out of her life, too—those pleasant little chats across her sewing table where Paul Harvey had watched the orchids grow. Yes, it was all true, this gossip, that Paul gave all his heart to his sister. But perhaps if a certain slump in stocks and an abounding cashbox had not done their united worst for herself and her mother it might have been different.

And she closed the box sharply, tied the twine in hard knots and went out for a walk. She would not be home when the messenger called.

Mrs. James Drew was giving an "afternoon." The crowd was thinning out, and the hostess was standing in a small alcove with Mrs. Donnelly. Said the latter:

"My dear Virginia, I shall always feel that it was my fault. I sent your brother to Sylvia Carr for those miserable orchid shades and now—"

Virginia Drew smiled with lips that quivered just a trifle.

"And now my brother says he is the happiest man in the world. It is odd to see how composedly she meets the women for whom she once made german favors, but she has certainly been a success. Don't you think so?"

Mrs. Donnelly nodded her head, and they both glanced at the graceful figure, crowned with copper colored hair, crossing the room in a long trailing robe of softest gray. Virginia Drew stretched out her hand to touch a silken orchid which topped a silver candlestick.

"I shall keep them always, for in their great purple hearts are woven the love story of the dearest and best brother in the world."

Are Authors Still Hungry?

It is a fallacy to suppose that the day of the hungry author is of the past. The genus still exists. Often, doubtless, he is author because he is hungry, but the more serious case is to be met where he is hungry because he yearns to be author. Grub street has as many tenants as of old, has indeed, overflowed its bounds in every direction. The inability nowadays to construct a story of some kind is a very rare piece of distinction, and too frequently the ability to do so makes grub of many who might unfurl wings in more practical states of being. It is this large class of self appointed grubs that butters the bread of that modern product, the literary reader, who, by a strange anomaly, is apt to be something of a grub himself, with the added gift of discernment. So important a factor, indeed, in the success or nonsuccess of the struggling author is the official reader that it is through his eyes alone that an insight can be gained into the term incognita lying between the submission of a manuscript and its final disposition.—Gutenberg's Magazine.

Iron Tree of Vienna.

Hardly the world over could there be found a tree which has come into more intimate connection with the youth destined of success in life than the curious iron tree of Vienna. For in the old days, when it was the custom of every apprentice who had attained to some degree of proficiency in his trade to bid farewell to family and friends and set out on foot to seek his fortune, he went before leaving the city and drove a nail into this tree's trunk.

Should the nail then drive straight the act was regarded as especially ominous of success and that his road over difficulties would prove smooth, but when it bent or broke in the driving the face of the apprentice turned suddenly awry, he believing that either he would fall utterly in life or that success would only come to him late and through most difficult channels.

In the remnant of the tree that now remains so many nails have been driven that not a vestige of its original wood can be seen. Literally its surface is hard as nails.

Narrow Escape.

She—Of course he bored me awfully, but I don't think I showed it. Every time I yawned I just hid it with my hand.

He (trying to be gallant)—Really, I don't see how a hand so small—could—hide—er—that is—beautifl weather we're having, isn't it?—Philadelphia Press.

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